

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 ABU DHABI 000249

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR CA/VO, CA/VO/F/P & L/CA
STATE FOR NEA/ARPI
STATE PLS PASS TO USTR for Doug Bell

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CVIS](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [AE](#)

SUBJECT: UAEG PRESENTS UAE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING REGARDING
VISAS/MOVEMENT OF PERSONS

REF: Jan 18 Lynn - Smyth E-Mail

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request. Please see para 4.

[1](#)2. (U) On January 24, 2006, Assistant Under Secretary for International Cooperation Mohammed Abdul Jalil delivered to Econ Chief a diplomatic note containing a Memorandum of Understanding regarding visas and the U.S. - UAE Free Trade Agreement negotiations. MFA requested that the U.S. review the memorandum of understanding with a view to signing it simultaneously with an FTA. Econchief reiterated that visa matters are outside the scope of an FTA, but committed to forwarding the MOU to the Department for comment. During the meeting, Abdul Jalil also requested information on the requirements of the Visa Waiver Program. In a January 25 meeting, Ambassador told UAEG lead negotiator MinState Finance Dr. Mohammed Khalfan bin Khirbash that visas/movement of persons were outside the scope of an FTA.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Emboffs have explained to the UAEG on numerous occasions that the Embassy is committed to the expeditious processing of all types of visas for Emirati citizens, including those who intend to conduct business in the US. For Emirati nationals, receiving B visas (visitors for business or pleasure), we routinely issue visas valid for 10 years. Most of the year, applicants are able to get a visa appointment within 1-2 business days in Abu Dhabi and 4-5 business days in Dubai (Note: in the peak visa period in the summer, this pushes out 1-2 and 2-3 weeks respectively). Historically, the refusal rate for Emiratis is well less than 5 percent. Most Emirati applicants can receive their visas within one working day. The remainder (those requiring administrative/security processing) receive visa approval between 5 days and three weeks. A handful of cases take longer to complete.

[1](#)4. (U) Action Request. Post would appreciate Department's comments on the attached MOU and instructions on how to answer the UAEG's request. Post plans to refer the MFA to the Department web site for information on the Visa Waiver Program.

[1](#)5. (U) Begin text of Embassy translation of diplomatic note.

Complementary Opening

With reference to the third round of the U.S.-UAE FTA negotiations and in particular the section regarding mobility of persons in the services area, the UAE side has suggested the possibility of signing a memorandum of understanding to facilitate mobility of the UAE nationals and senior professional residents to the United States easily and without delay (on the basis of the official memorandum that had been reached between the two countries, which grants 10 years entry visa to the United States), or to take benefit of the "Visa Waiver Plan" to visit the USA, similar to the one, which is in force for citizens of some countries.

In this connection, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates hope that the Embassy would refer to the attached Memorandum of Understanding's proposal to the concerned U.S. entities for their opinions and comments in order to pave the way for signing this memorandum at the same time the FTA is signed.

End text of Embassy translation of diplomatic note.

[1](#)8. (U) Begin text of Memorandum of Understanding.

Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the United Arab Emirates on Cooperation in Matters of Entry and Residence for citizens of the U.S.A. and citizens U.A.E.

The Government of the United States of America and the Government of the United Arab Emirates,

Desiring to strengthen and develop further their bilateral relations,

Seeking to encourage and facilitate exchange of visits by businessmen and holders of diplomatic, special and service

passports, those desiring to have medical treatment and their escorts, tourists, students and resident senior professionals, on the basis of reciprocity and the observance of national laws of their respective countries,

Agreeing on the importance of existing security cooperation between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the United Arab Emirates,

Cognizant of the importance of lending special attention to matters relating to the security of travel documents, countering illegal immigration and repatriation of citizens, Simultaneous with the negotiations of the Free Trade Agreement between two countries, and considering the need to facilitate and encourage exchange of visits by U.A.E. businessmen and senior professionals residing in the United Arab Emirates to visit the U.S.A.

Hereby express their willingness to facilitate the entry of citizens of the United States of America to the United Arab Emirates and the entry of citizens of the United Arab Emirates to the United States of America, and have agreed as follows:

Chapter One: Travel Facilities

I. Granting Visas without Delay:

1. The two Parties will grant visas for entry to each other's country to the categories mentioned in the preamble of this Memorandum and within a duration not exceeding twenty-four hours.

2. The Government of the United States of America will expedite granting visas by American missions abroad within the framework of the domestic laws in force in the U.S.A., and this facility will apply particularly to citizens of the United Arab Emirates, business visits, those desiring to undergo medical treatment and their escorts, resident senior professionals, holders of U.A.E. diplomatic, special and service passports and for tourist visits.

3. The Government of the United States of America, within the laws enforced in the U.S.A., resolves to undertake measures to make it possible, in principle, to grant entry visa to citizens of United Arab Emirates at American points of entry if prior application for the visa were not possible, especially when there would be an unforeseen compelling reason to travel to the U.S.A. and return to the United Arab Emirates were guaranteed, while other requirements of entry were satisfied according to American law.

4. The two Parties will exceptionally and promptly issue visas at their borders of entry to each other's citizens in cases of urgent situations of illness, serious accidents and critical circumstances.

II. Facility of entry into the country for holders of diplomatic, special and service passports:

1. The American competent authorities will issue citizens of the United Arab Emirates holding valid diplomatic, special and service passports multiple entry visas allowing stays for as long a period as possible.

2. These visas will be granted gratis with a duration not exceeding twenty-four hours and for a validity period of up to ten years.

III. Facility of Entry for Businessmen, Tourists, Medical Patients and their Escorts:

1. American competent authorities will grant UAE businessmen and resident businessmen multiple entry visas within a duration not exceeding twenty-four hours and for a period of five years.

2. This will apply also to medical patients and their resident escorts, visitors and tourists, with the framework of consular cooperation between two countries.

IV. Facility of Entry for Students:

American competent authorities will grant U.A.E. students entry visas gratis and in the shortest time possible within a period not exceeding two weeks.

Chapter Two: Security Standards/Security of Documents against forgery

The two Parties express their readiness to:

1. Guarantee security to travel documents to the highest level against forgery, and to review the foregoing in terms of maintaining minimum security standards for machine readable travel documents recommended by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO Doc. 9303, 5th Edition 2003, Annex to Section III, Security Standards for Machine Readable Documents) and to ensure their agreeability whenever necessary and in the shortest time possible.

12. Make technical progress necessary with a view to introducing biometric specifications to travel documents issued by the two countries and to comply with their standards.

13. Support efforts of unifying the standards by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and implement its recommendations at the shortest time possible.

14. Exchange information on the measures being undertaken by the two countries concerning their travel documents.

Chapter Three: General Applicable Terms

1. The two Parties agree on the necessity of their citizens to respect the laws of each other's country.

2. This Memorandum shall not affect the prevailing laws in the territory of with Party in regard to the exercise of commercial activities or work in other trades.

3. This Memorandum shall not affect the rights and obligations of the two Parties arising from international instruments and agreements that either one or both of them are parties to.

4. This Memorandum of Understanding will come into force after its signature, and either Party may terminate either wholly or partly the implementation of the Memorandum at any time, due to considerations of public order, national security or preventative health precautions, and the other Party should be informed of that accordingly and without delay.

5. This Memorandum of Understanding will be reviewed after one year's period from the date of its entry into force by the two Parties together in a joint meeting to be decided upon request by either Party.

This Memorandum of Understanding is signed in two original copies in the English and Arabic languages and both texts are equally authentic.

Signed at on

For the Government of the United States of America

For the Government of the United Arab Emirates